



*The CROSS symbolizes the Lord and his Church;
the CIRCLE, eternity and the spirit of God;
the SQUARE, man and his world.
Combined these represent the Church
linking man with man under God.*

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EMANUEL SWEDENBORG

(1688-1772)

At a time in history when new lands were being settled in the western hemisphere, when a nation was preparing to be born, a remarkable man on the old continent was also discovering a world.

He was a man of position, culture and charm, of many talents and great intellectual endowment. Especially did he have integrity and spiritual stature. Son of a Lutheran bishop, Emanuel Swedenborg spent the first half of his adult life in scientific work, under appointment by the Swedish government. His studies and resultant writings were almost unbelievably extensive. In an era when, compared with now, scientists were few and limited, Swedenborg investigated in all directions of the physical universe; he made discoveries and inventions anticipating the knowledge of later centuries.

When he turned his research to human life, he explored not only the structure and functions of the body but also of the mind. Inevitably his study brought him to the relationship between the created and the Creator — between man and God. An astute philosopher, he took up theology; and at mid-life became absorbed in searching for the actual location in the body of the soul.

This search was interrupted by a new experience. Always gifted with extra-sensory perception, Swedenborg suddenly found this ability expanding. He became aware of another world intermingled with this, a world full of people and activity and scenery. He learned that it was not in fact another world, but a higher degree of the same one we know: another more developed aspect of it, usually invisible at our stage of existence. (To

understand this, remember that a new baby sees nothing because its eyes cannot yet focus, only gradually perceiving surroundings as the eye muscles slowly develop.)

Far ahead of his times in comprehension of material knowledge, Swedenborg now moved further forward, into a realization of spiritual realities. He became conscious of the personal presence of the Lord, and felt himself to be under divine instruction that he might understand and explain to others the spiritual meanings within all earthly phenomena.

Swedenborg learned that the world as we know it is a school, and that the main stream of life goes on in a larger dimension more real than this for all who have passed the moment we call "death." He learned that a personal relationship between God and individuals is the reason for human life, and that all of creation is for fostering this relationship. At times it has been necessary for God to use extraordinary means to keep humanity aware of its heritage. The ministry of Christ, the Holy Bible, are reminders from God to man of his spiritual destiny. The great struggle in human existence has always been between God's teaching and man's reluctance to be taught!

For over twenty-five years Swedenborg walked and talked in both aspects of the universe at once, observing the lives and activities of those who had "gone on," learning the effects of this stage of existence upon the next, and the influence of that upon this. Above all he learned the nature and quality of God — Who God is, and what man is in relation to Him.

At that day such experience and knowledge could not readily be shared; few people had either the capacity or preparation to accept it. But Swedenborg, knowing that divine Truth is for all time, faithfully recorded in many volumes what he learned during the quarter cen-

tury of revelation. Much of it he published at his own expense, to make it available when any should be ready for it. These books have since been reprinted in various languages and distributed the world over.

Today extra-sensory perception has been scientifically demonstrated; and there are many records of personal glimpses into "the spiritual world." These confirm the information which Swedenborg gave. But he remains unique in the extensiveness of his experience, and in the depth and quality of what he presents.

From the author's book, *Talking With God*, first edition.

Identification of References for Quotations from Swedenborg

H.H.	<i>Heaven and Hell</i>
A.	<i>Arcana Coelestia</i>
D.L.&W.	<i>Divine Love and Wisdom</i>
N.J.&H.D.	<i>New Jerusalem and Its Heavenly Doctrine</i>
T.C.R.	<i>True Christian Religion</i>
D.U.	<i>Doctrine of Uses</i>

The numbers following initials, in the quotation references, are section-numbers.

MYSTERIES

Here is a story — a true story that happened near where my husband and I were staying. A retired policeman from New York, whom we'll call Joe Smith, lived with his wife in an old farmhouse in rural New Hampshire. The house was 125 years old, and they had been there for 22 peaceful, uneventful years.

At the end of that time a nephew and his wife came to visit for the New Year's weekend. On the night of January 3rd disorder broke out in that house: first, they heard a repeated sound of something dropping — and traced it to a cluster of medicine tablets lying on a bare floor. Then a shaving brush, always kept in the bathroom cabinet, appeared on the floor of the hall. Next, a pile of nutshells was found on an upstairs bed. And in the morning a crushed cake of soap was lying in the hallway.

The guests were leaving that day. While his wife was packing, the nephew went out to start the car and Mr. Smith sat down at the kitchen table; as he did, a package of chewing gum sailed past him into the hall. The gum had been in a closed drawer next to the sink. He picked up the gum, put it on the table, and went out to see why his nephew had not come back. Then Mrs. Smith heard a noise in the dining room, investigated and found the package of gum on the floor there — its 5 pieces spread out like a hand of cards. Another loud noise proved to be 10 poker chips kept in the dining room but now scattered on the bathroom floor.

Mr. Smith and his nephew came in to report that neither of their cars would start. Presently the nephew was hit by a 5¢ piece that came flying through the air, the shaving brush reappeared on the hall floor, pennies

from a bowl in the dining room moved onto the floor, and 8 plastic ice-cube moulds were found in the hallway to the garage. A piece of candy traveled from the living room to the hall, was picked up and left on the kitchen table and later found melting on a radiator in the dining room. A priest who had been sent for by the frightened Protestant Smiths had noted the candy on the table; and before he left, it had gone to the radiator.

All that day and next, more and more such happenings occurred. The smell of an air-freshener filled the house although no one had used the spray-can; this fragrance remained for a week. The shaving brush disappeared entirely. On January 6th the electric stove and toaster and the furnace stopped functioning. Later the side door would not close and the latch was found in a vase nearby, with one of its 2 screws bent and the other missing.

By the middle of the month news of this suddenly-haunted house had traveled all over the United States, by radio and television and newspapers, and the Smiths were now besieged not only by their own confusion but by fascinated strangers (including my husband and me). Reporters, scientists, detectives, and psychical investigators all wanted to interview the Smiths and examine their house. Phone calls came from as far away as California. We wrote, saying we realized they must be swamped with intruders but could we at their convenience come to talk with them — since I had long been studying this sort of happening and would like to add their experience to my records. They were very courteous and cordial, and so we went to see them.

Mr. Smith, a matter-of-fact ex-policeman, declared that there had to be a cause for what went on, and he wanted answers! There must be an explanation, and he welcomed anyone who could help him find it. But, he said, nobody had any solutions. Oh, some people told

him it was spirits — some dead person trying to get attention, or the ghost of someone who had lived there in the past.

But Smith stated emphatically: "I don't believe in such things. I don't believe in ghosts. I'm not interested in that kind of nonsense; what I want is *real* answers."

We asked many questions about the people involved: the Smiths themselves, their guests and neighbors, the history of the house; but they told us nothing unusual about them. The nephew and wife had previously visited there, and had been in the house this time for 3 days before the disturbances began. After they left, the only incident that *continued* was the strong odor of the air-freshener which no one had used. There were, however, occasional other mysterious occurrences.

For instance, 2 weeks later a journalist came to get material for a magazine article. He took pictures of the house, and made a tape-recording of his conversation with the owners. That evening he phoned to say that when he got home he found that his film had disappeared from the camera, and his tape had on it only the babbling voice of a small child! A lady visitor had an equally disconcerting experience. She and the Smiths were sitting in the kitchen talking, when suddenly one from a row of buttons on the front of her dress jumped off with a loud pop and landed in the middle of the floor.

"This is not possible!" the lady exclaimed. "These are special buttons which I wanted to use on this dress, and when I sewed them on I took great care to secure each one with extra reinforcement so there would be no danger of losing them. This simply can *not* happen!" Whereupon just beyond her feet two large pools of water appeared and spread across the kitchen.

Months later I phoned the Smiths to ask if their

situation had cleared up, and if they had arrived at any explanation. They said that after a priest and a medium had "exorcised" the disturbances, they stopped; and it had cost \$800. to repair the stove and oil-burner. No cause had been discovered but Mrs. Smith thought one suggestion reasonable: that the disorders were sent by God to prevent the nephew from driving home that week, because a terrible blizzard was developing and he might have had an accident!

I have told all this in detail because it is such a typical and clear-cut example, one which I personally know about, of a kind of psychic phenomenon which occurs frequently and is called "poltergeistic activity." (The word "poltergeist" is German and means "noisy ghost"). Psychic Phenomena and Extra Sensory Perception go hand in hand: they are 2 sides of the same coin.

Mysteries have always been my hobby, and E S P — that is, Extra Sensory Perception — was a mystery which I started working on more than 40 years ago. In those days there was no such term as E S P; it was all called Psychic Phenomena. Actually *this* term applies to a wide array of occurrences some of which are observable by the physical senses — as in the story just told you — but whose causes are not observable. E S P applies to occurrences and knowledges which are not apparent to the physical senses of the person perceiving them, but only to a so-called "sixth sense" within him. E S P is a form of psychic phenomenon. It is also an entirely subjective experience, which makes it difficult to share with others.

Subjective experiences are those which only the person having them can observe or feel, and because of this no one else can *know* that they happen but will either take one's word for it or doubt. If I tell you I have

a splitting headache, you believe me even though you can't possibly see it — because you know people do have headaches; but if I tell you that I see two people standing in the middle of a room which you see as empty, *you* will insist there is no one there. You are judging my subjective experience on the basis of your own perception. No one can ever judge what another person feels or perceives. This is why the study of E S P has been a very elusive one.

In 1882 a Society for Psychical Research was started in England; two years later a similar one was formed in America; and thus began organized and scientific investigation into all types of psychic phenomena. These included haunted houses, mediums, automatic writing, levitation, apports, ectoplasm, psychokinesis, hypnotism, telepathy, clairvoyance, precognition, possession, apparitions, spirit photography, faith-healings, poltergeistic activity. If this list seems long, it is actually even longer — showing what a wide and varied field is that of psychic phenomena. To discuss each of the many interesting forms would require a large book; here we can consider only a few, those which especially relate to the E S in our title.

E S P is full of mysteries which neither the British nor American Psychical Research Societies have solved, although they established that psychic phenomena do truly happen. Despite good guesses they did not reach satisfactory explanations because they could not find the primary causes. It is my belief that they might have been greatly helped by seriously studying E S — that is, Emanuel Swedenborg. Modern research is indicating what Swedenborg stated over 2 centuries ago: that E S P is a faculty in all human beings. It is often active in small children and among primitive people but otherwise dormant on this plane of existence except in

rare instances or in unusual persons. After death, Swedenborg said, everyone uses E S P.

It took much reading about the questions and puzzles in psychical research, and much reading in Swedenborg's writings, before I noticed that 2 and 2 from each direction made 4 — that is, the questions met answers. It is in Swedenborg's reports of the "World of Spirits," and of our inevitable transition to it, and of its continual infiltration into this level of existence — it is in Swedenborg's many scattered statements concerning all this, that we find the explanations of what we call psychic phenomena and especially of extra-sensory perception.

Attention to this area of human experience seems to rise and fall in cycles. It evidenced itself negatively during the colonial days of "witch hunting" (and it is rather weird that recently there has been interest in *studying* witchcraft and trying to learn its magical arts). About a hundred years ago there was a great upsurge of intelligent investigation which carried to the turn of the century, rose again during World War I and again following World War II. During the past decade and now, there has developed a new curiosity far more widespread than ever before — and more readily accepted.

Forty years ago it was difficult to publish in a popular magazine anything dealing with extra-sensory perception; such interests were regarded not only generally but also by psychiatrists as a symptom of mental unbalance. Nowadays newspapers and magazines feature discussions of psychic phenomena; television offers programs dramatizing them; and the paperback shelves are filled with volumes telling about ghosts, possession, prophecies, visions, miracles and mediums. A number of universities give courses in experimentation with E S P; Duke University, in

North Carolina, was a pioneer in this, its famous Dr. J. B. Rhine having originated the term E S P.

Time magazine, a leader in reporting what's happening now, has featured two excellent discourses concerning man's inner life: one a series of perceptive essays; the other a ten-page exploration.

The essays, presented weekly during April 1973 and titled *Second Thoughts About Man*, pointed out that our society — especially its younger segment — is feeling a new hunger for explanation of intangible realities, and a growing conviction that we don't yet know it all — that there is a further dimension to be understood: the spiritual level of existence. Included in this is extra-sensory perception which now is being examined by numerous establishments such as the Stanford Research Institute and the Institute of Noetic Sciences under the presidency of ex-astronaut Edgar D. Mitchell.

The ten-page exploration appeared in the March 4, 1974 issue which had a vivid cover labelled *The Psychics*. The discussion, *Boom Times on the Psychic Frontier*, was a lively offering of various mystifying activities believed to demonstrate psychic ability — or believed *not* to, according to who was observing. Introduced was an assortment of individuals, famous for extra-sensory accomplishments, and the research being done upon them by a variety of investigators. Emphasis leaned toward the abundance of trickery and fakes which experiments exposed, yet it was conceded that there is an area still unexplained and not disproved. The conclusion: there is great need for unpredisposed researchers and more meticulous methods in the study of psychic phenomena, that we may truly learn what there is to know about this elusive aspect of human experience.

This direction of thinking indicates that *now* may be the time for Swedenborg — the unique scientist who found answers for those willing to study them. Swedenborg's many books are available, written two centuries ago in anticipation of the day when they would be widely read with educated intelligence and a hunger for enlightenment.

In contrast to the *Time* articles is a recent controversy created in New Hampshire when a Senior High School announced a new course entitled "Witchcraft and Mysticism." Parents were incensed; clergymen attacked it as anti-Christian; town officials declared it unconstitutional; everyone said it was dangerous. The School contended that it was actually only an English course, built around subject matter which would stimulate otherwise bored students. The students themselves were looking forward with pleasure to something new and different.

Thus, as never happened before, masses of the population are hearing about this whole unusual area of human experience — but familiarity has not yet brought understanding. Human beings are getting used to the knowledge of a level of ability within themselves higher than that of the body or brain, but they are far from realizing its meaning. E S P is now recognized as something real, but it is not known *why*. Swedenborg tells us why.

LIFE BEYOND DEATH

Let us take a quick look at the "World of Spirits," as Swedenborg described it (in his book *Heaven and Hell*, numbers 421 onward). He explained that death is, like birth, merely a transition from a preliminary stage of existence to another in which every human — as the individual he has become — continues to function at a

new level. This level beyond death is one of spiritual realization, with freedom from physical restrictions, and is the immediate destination of every dying person.

"The spirit is the man himself," Swedenborg wrote. "When the body is separated from its spirit, which is called dying, the man remains still a man and lives. . . . The spirit of man is equally in a form, the human form." (H.H.433-4)

Now the individual is called "a spirit" but finds himself looking and feeling just as he always has, with the same thoughts in his mind that were there before, and an environment — with people around him — similar to what he has always known. He is no wiser at this moment; and he has the same desires that he used to have. If before now he was developing spiritually, he will quickly learn what has happened and will soon be in affinitive company and will find renewed activity according to his interests and talents.

But if he has had no spiritual growth (as many do not, on this earth) he will be confused by his familiar yet different situation; if he acquired no spiritual knowledges during his earth life he does not easily grasp the fact that he is now a spirit. And so he may turn back in thought and desire to the earth environment which is all he knows.

Actually he is still in it; for the World of Spirits is not off in the sky or outer space or in some remote Never-Never Land, but right here all around us — invisibly mingled with what *we* can see and touch and so call *our* world. Newborn babies do not see our world at all, because their eyes can not yet focus. Certain animals see it only in the dark; dogs hear sounds, cats see things, which we can neither hear nor see. If we look through field glasses there may be only a gray blank until with careful adjusting of the lens a far-away landscape suddenly appears right up close. In the same way we

do not see the Spiritual World, not because it isn't here but because our perception can not yet bring it into focus.

An electric fan has hard solid blades within its circumference, but when the fan is running at high speed the blades seem to disappear. Conversely a mirage is something which appears in a definite place but does not exist there. The air is filled with winds which we feel but never see. Thus it is obvious that our world has in it many things which we may know through only one or another of our physical senses, or not at all — or once in a while when certain conditions make it possible.

Vibration and frequency, terms which scientists use in relation to the physical world, apply first of all to the Spiritual World for both together make the Universe in which the physical *results* from the spiritual.

The Universe has differing levels of vibration and frequency, so that what goes on at one level is ordinarily not observable at another. We call 2 of these levels "worlds" — the physical and spiritual worlds — and have the illusion that the 2 are separated. In reality they are fully intermingled; and if the vibration or frequency rates of the 2 become similar at some points, then what we call "psychic phenomena" can occur. Furthermore, a great deal of interaction takes place without our being conscious of it.

And so the man who has just died but can not adjust himself to the higher frequency of the World of Spirits, lingers in the frequency where he feels more comfortable; and he *sees* his accustomed earth environment and his former associates, and is extremely frustrated because they ignore him. Then he may attempt to force their attention by producing noise or disturbance — rappings and thumps, moving of furniture or breaking of objects — at which he can succeed because he is still

attuned to earth's frequencies. Some who have just died but are able to adapt to and understand their new situation, are then impelled with a desire to let family and friends know that the so-called "deceased" is still alive and well.

Here again, it is first necessary to attract attention and so there begins one or another form of psychic phenomena. A dramatic example of this was the experience of Bishop James Pike, following his son's suicidal death while under the influence of L S D. Pike's account (in his book *The Other Side*, published 1968) of the strange but significant happenings which finally led to direct communication (that is, through authentic mediums) between the Bishop and his son, indicates how definitely the psychic phenomena in the Bishop's apartment were for attracting attention and establishing recognition of young Jim's continued existence.

Swedenborg explains that the Most Ancient People — the earliest of the human race, who knew and obeyed spiritual laws — communicated directly with spirits and angels, but lost this privilege as they gradually became absorbed in the sense of self and of the material world. Nevertheless the ability remains inherent and goes into action following death, so that there is then instantaneous communication among spirits and, on occasion, between them and those on earth. If we realize how involved with earth's frequency all unadvanced spirits are, we can see as quite reasonable the assumption that poltergeistic activity is caused by such spirits trying to get our attention for one reason or another. And we can see that possibly we might become aware of their intense efforts.

Poltergeistic activity is often a feature of haunted houses, but a house can be very haunted without great

noise or movement of furnishings. The traditional footsteps, apparitions, sighings or sobbings, opening and shutting of doors or windows, turning on and off of lights — these occurrences are just as upsetting as a loud clamor or an object flying through the air, and usually more frequent and prolonged. In such cases it does not seem as if the motive is simply to establish personal contact, but rather to resolve some difficulty or unhappiness with which the ghost is obsessed.

Swedenborg tells us that we take with us into the World of Spirits whatever thought was uppermost in our minds at the time of death. If the state of mind is one of great fear or rage or tragedy, and the mind is undeveloped spiritually, the intensity of the last thoughts can remain fixed — like a phonograph needle on a cracked record — and in the World of Spirits might become an habitual obsession. Here on earth one symptom of mental illness is preoccupation with a fixed idea which the patient does not let go but lives with day after day.

Haunted houses often have a history of bygone tragedy, so it is logical to suppose that persons connected with it might, after death, linger at the scene trying to resolve the situation or get help; they are suffering from trauma which they can not escape if they are unable to orient themselves to their new spiritual environment. Or it may be just that a completely undeveloped soul clings to a familiar locality, and in so doing can be occasionally heard or felt or even seen — coming downstairs, opening the front door, walking in the garden.

Sometimes hauntings are perceived only by persons with active E S P, but sometimes everyone on the location experiences them. Incidentally, Swedenborg mentions that *we* sometimes haunt the World of Spirits! (H.H.438) When our attention is fully withdrawn from

the external environment and we are, as it were, "lost in thought" — perhaps studying in an absorbed way or meditating in depth — we then actually appear in the World of Spirits. Swedenborg says we look rather misty, and if a spirit speaks to us we disappear. Which is exactly how it is with the apparitions seen on earth!

There are hundreds of accounts of haunted houses, some of them famous and thoroughly investigated. Borley Rectory has been called the most haunted house in England (where hauntings are commonplace), and Borley is certainly the most spectacular. Built in 1863 by a clergyman with 17 children, it was a rambling affair surrounding a bricked courtyard — and all of its 35 rooms were haunted.

The phenomena were excitingly varied: many apparitions including a nun, a headless man, a figure in gray, a girl in white, and in later years one of the clergyman's sons who had died. A special feature was a coach and four which often rumbled down the narrow lane and across a meadow, passing through trees, walls and hedges as it rushed along. Then there were sounds like dogs' feet padding around, scratchings, thumps and bumps, a woman's voice, bell-ringing and church-music, footsteps, the noises of waterfalls and dishes breaking. Writing appeared on walls in locked rooms.

Dogs were frightened to pieces and wouldn't stay in the house. All kinds of investigators witnessed these disturbances; and one psychical researcher, Harry Price, moved into Borley and lived there with a crew of assistants to study the situation for a year. Sometime following 1938 the house burned, leaving only a shell with glassless windows. But since then, even in the ruins, the apparition of a woman has been seen looking out of an upstairs window — where no floors survived the fire.

Another famous haunted house was Epworth Rectory, the childhood home of Methodist John Wesley. It seems curious that this, like Borley, was the home of a clergyman with a large number of children, John Wesley being one of 19. In the early 1700s this family experienced 2 months of tumultuous disorder which began with moaning sounds, knockings all over the house, footsteps up and down the stairs at night, rumblings in the cellar and attic. The father at first thought his children were playing pranks, but soon changed his mind and bought a big watchdog which, however, was terrified whenever the weird sounds occurred. The racket increased and became at times an uproar throughout the building — “particularly,” the mother wrote in a letter, “at family prayers.” Then the father began to encounter an invisible force shoving, pushing, and finally hurling him across the room. A heavy door-latch lifted itself repeatedly; objects and furniture began to move around. Finally apparitions appeared, chiefly of queer animals. After 2 months of all this, the furor stopped.

Sandringham Castle has throughout its history had footsteps in its corridors, doors opening by themselves, lights turning on and off, and additional poltergeistic activity — always starting on Christmas Eve and continuing for about 2 months. The gardens of Versailles, and the rooms in the White House in Washington, D.C., have well-publicized apparitions. And there are many records of hauntings in otherwise insignificant houses, old and *new*, throughout the land.

For some reason ships seem to be especially vulnerable to mysteries involving psychic phenomena. There are numerous documented stories of ships that have sunk in storms, yet appear again and again in the vicinity of the wreck; and ships that have been found

wandering at sea, in perfect order with lifeboats intact but no human aboard; and ships that have vanished without a trace, leaving no wreckage and no one remaining from perhaps a large group of people. Crews or individuals drowned in wrecks have re-appeared as apparitions; and there are many reports of apparitions and strange lights being seen on shipboard.

POSSESSION

Another form of psychic phenomenon is "possession," and we are hearing quite a bit about it today not only in television dramas but in best-selling books and movies. Possession refers to a person being dominated by an evil spirit.

Swedenborg has been "quoted" as saying that possession (which he also calls obsession) no longer occurs. He did not say that. Let me quote, in somewhat condensed form: "There are spirits who when they come to a man do not conjoin themselves with his thought like other spirits, but enter into his body, and occupy all his senses and speak through his mouth, and act by his members, then not knowing but that all things of the man are theirs. These are the spirits who obsess man . . . such obsessions are not permitted at this day." (H.H.257) "At this day," however, does not mean in the last half of the 20th century; when Swedenborg said "at this day" it was in 1758.

He also wrote: "There are no external possessions at this day, but yet there are internal possessions." (A.5990) . . . "Very many at this day are possessed by spirits; for there are at this day interior obsessions, but not — as formerly — exterior." (A.4793)

And in speaking of evil spirits who burn to get man into their power, he wrote: "They study to destroy the conscience; and when this is destroyed they get posses-

sion of men's interiors and even obsess them, although the man does not know this. . . . They who have no conscience are thus obsessed." (A.1983)

The distinction, here, between external and internal is in reference to the physical body and the mind. And the words "at this day" do not at all apply to our century during which conditions and life on earth have changed completely.

One has only to pay attention to the crimes crowding our news media, to see in them a horrifying projection of exactly how Swedenborg describes evil spirits as behaving; and it seems indeed as if at *this* day external possession may be occurring again. There have been ghastly crimes committed by persons who have said: "Something suddenly made me do it." The dramatizations of violence on television are as systematically numerous and detailed as if planned and controlled by an organized evil compulsion. *TV Guide* once announced that there would be "hardly a moment" during the coming season when gunplay would not be found somewhere on TV. The psychologists who say these programs do not harm children certainly never have spent the hours it would take to *know* how much violent crime there is on TV and how emphatically it is *visual education*!

The ominous spread of drug addiction among not only young people but even children, surely is diabolically instigated. Thus internal possession of men on earth, by evil spirits, is a tragedy which does not seem to have become less since Swedenborg's day. The sensations produced by the psychedelic drugs, such as L S D, are akin to the hallucinations of the insane.

When years ago I worked in the psychiatric field, I had opportunity to observe many hallucinated patients — and was convinced that a good number of them were seeing into or hearing the World of Spirits and being

tormented by some of its undesirable residents. Since these patients were ill, their hallucinations were also disordered and came to them from disordered spirits — for our relationship with the World of Spirits is always on the basis of *affinity*. I suspect, incidentally, that sometimes persons are confined to hospitals when their only symptom is that they are experiencing E S P which is not, of course, an illness.

Psychedelic drugs upset the chemical balance within the body and, in some way not understood, artificially stimulate the functioning of E S P but without orderly control, so that the impressions received are like hallucinations in psychosis, or deliriums from fever, and from all reports sound like a disoriented and *unguided* tour into the borderland of the World of Spirits — a conglomerate of fantasies from confused spirits and nightmares from evil ones. As with possession, evil spirits are yearning for opportunities to express themselves through unresisting human channels, and anyone who is temporarily disintegrated — as from drugs or alcohol — is an open invitation for undesirable spirits to gather round.

It has been noted that persons vulnerable to psychic phenomena of disorderly sorts often are children, mental defectives, psychotics, and those suffering from illness, head-injury or other abnormal physical states (as when drugs have been taken). This suggests that spirits engaged in disorderly effort are attracted to disordered persons on this plane. Swedenborg makes it clear that affinity is a law of order in the Spiritual World where everyone gravitates to his own kind; and also we attract to us, here on this plane, spirits who find in us something to identify with.

Swedenborg wrote: "All spirits in the World of Spirits are adjoined to men." (D.L.&W.140) "The spirits adjoined to a man are of such quality as he himself is, as to

love; but good spirits are adjoined to him by the Lord, whereas evil spirits are invited by the man himself." (H.H.295) This does not mean a conscious and deliberate invitation, but simply the leaving open of a door — perhaps in one's habits of thought or desire, or just in personality traits, or when one is not in full self-control. Swedenborg said: "The life which is from the Lord has a power of attraction because it is from Love — and all Love has in it this power, inasmuch as it wills to be conjoined so as to be One." (A.8604) This is true not only of heavenly love but also of self-love which yearns for conjunction with others for its *own* gain and power.

We need not, however, become fearful, as people are apt to do, about evil spirits being around us. Bacteria and viruses are around us, too, spiders and mosquitos, poisons and explosives, and thieves and murderers, but we are seldom bothered by or even aware of them. The law of affinity is in control of our spiritual associations, so that we *can* according to our choice and effort become immune to undesirable entities. We must never forget that there are also angelic spirits with us, and it is the Divine intention that we associate with *them*.

In the recent excitement over demon-possession, aroused by best-selling (!) books and movies, little attention has been paid to angels. All too willing to believe in demons, people seem to have given no thought to the power of angels and the concept of guardian angels, well established in the Bible.

The old-fashioned angel with wings, halo and harp went out of style and nothing definite took its place. That image was the creation of medieval artists who thus portrayed, by equipment painted in, the characteristics of angels: ability to be anywhere, holiness, and harmonious vibrations. But this regalia

was taken literally, until some began to question it and finally in rejection discarded angels altogether ("throwing the baby out with the bath-water"!). An earlier idea of angels made them a special order of beings created before humans, as a sort of entourage for God; and this notion outlasted the one of wings and harps. But today many people either do not believe at all in angels, or are vague — even uncomfortable — about considering them.

This is a pity, for the truth about angels is joyous and sustaining. It comes from numerous extra-sensory experiences, and especially from the explicit statements given by Swedenborg. He wrote that following death all humans continue development (or lack of it) at a level focused upon eternal spiritual reality rather than physical matter, and according to affinity of people and their relationship with God they become angelic spirits in an environment which we call Heaven, or evil spirits with an environment known as Hell. Everyone in this Spiritual World has first lived on earth. And angels, said Swedenborg, are happily busy with all sorts of useful and creative activities, including protection and guidance and help for people on earth. Evil spirits are such because they have turned away from God, and therefore are interested only in self-expression or controlling others.

You and I are determining now, by the desires and thoughts and actions of our everyday life, whether when it is our turn to move on we will then become angels.

REINCARNATION

Reincarnation is a concept which seems to be proved by certain kinds of psychic phenomena. It is rather astonishing how many people today believe in rein-

carnation! The strength of this idea is another mystery whose solution, as far as I have been able to discover, only Swedenborg offers clues for. When a belief is as ancient and firmly rooted as is that of reincarnation, existing for centuries in Eastern cultures, it seems logical that it may have Truth at its source — a Truth which through the ages has become corrupted. The Most Ancient People, Swedenborg said, knew Truth; and certainly because of its very nature it must remain imbedded beneath any layers of falsification which mankind has heaped upon it. What is the Truth underlying persistent belief in reincarnation?

The psychic experiences which seem to indicate that a person has lived more than one lifetime on this earth include "memories" of actually unfamiliar times and places; "recognition" of a locality or person *not*, however, seen before; sudden comprehension of a strange language; knowledges of ancient events which one could not really know; the phenomenon of child prodigies; information gathered through hypnosis. All these unusual incidents are interpreted by many as recollections or repetitions from past lives which, reincarnationists say, we are not supposed to remember when reincarnated — although apparently sometimes do!

It seems queer that such a process should appeal to anyone, when it sounds so much like being demoted to a previous grade at school, with a loss of memory and so not able to profit from whatever was learned before! Part of the idea is that by doing it all over again one has a chance to correct or make amends for past mistakes and wrongs done to others, and this strikes some people as perfect justice. Actually it may be that reincarnation is believed in by persons who are afraid of the unknown and get a great sense of security in anticipating that after death they can live again on the same old earth that

they are accustomed to. Some of those who die believing in reincarnation would certainly be among the spirits who turn back immediately and seek to reestablish themselves on the physical plane, and apparently some of them become *obsessing* spirits in search of a susceptible physical body to take over.

A well-documented example of this, thought to be a strong proof of reincarnation, is the story of a shy and quiet 5-year-old Hindu girl who began talking about her husband and her little son and their home in another town. When she named her husband, an investigation began — and established that a man of that name did indeed live in that town, whose wife had died in childbirth a year before this little girl was born. When the girl was taken to see the widower, she was entirely at home with him and in the house and town, and he said she talked just like his wife and had the same mannerisms.

The girl recognized other relatives, and when she saw the son — one year older than herself — she embraced him and they became inseparable. She also located some valuables which the wife had hidden and no one had been able to find. The 2 children were so immediately attached to each other that they were taken to live together in the girl's own home. When she was 12 and he 13, they both died within a few months of each other.

A different kind of supposed reincarnation is outlined in a best-selling book of 17 years ago, *The Search for Bridey Murphy*. Its material was derived from tape recordings made during hypnosis-sessions in which a young housewife was regressed to her memories at age 1 and then, as an experiment, told to go back further to "some other place, in some other time." The result was the life-story of Bridey Murphy who lived in Ireland in the early 1800s, died at age 66, and

after a hazy period of doing and learning nothing, suddenly became (so she said) a baby again in Iowa, who turned out to be the young woman under hypnosis. Some of the data which Bridey gave about her years in Ireland was confirmable, but not all of it. In answer to questions about life after death, she described a silent and empty existence such as undeveloped souls undoubtedly might have in the World of Spirits.

Swedenborg has nothing to say about reincarnation by that name, but he nevertheless makes some significant statements which, if applied to the idea of reincarnation, are very enlightening. I quote: "The spirit of man, after death of the body, appears in the spiritual world in a human form . . . he is a man as to each and every thing, except that he is not encompassed with the *gross* body which he had in the world. This he leaves when he dies, nor does he ever resume it." (N.-J.&H.D.225) "Some of the ancients had the opinion that after thousands of years they should return into their former life and into all its acts, and also that they *had* returned. They concluded it from this: that sometimes there occurred to them a recollection, as it were, of things which they never saw or heard; and this came to pass because *spirits* flowed from their own memory into *their* ideas of thought." (H.H.256)

"Man during his life in the world is, as to his interiors, in company with other spirits [who] enter into all his memory and all the knowledges of memory that he possesses . . . they act as one by conjunction. Yet on both sides it is supposed that all their thoughts and feelings are from themselves. . . . The same spirits do not remain forever with a man, but are changed according to the man's states." (A.5851+)

Here we have the information, previously implied, that spirits can identify with us by knowing our

thoughts and feelings and believing them to be *theirs*. We also pick up their thoughts and feelings but assume them to be ours.

If this is a Truth which the Most Ancient People must have known, we can see a truthful origin for the concept of reincarnation which seems so erroneous to many. If the spirits near us can tune in on our knowledge and memories, thinking them to be their own, and through affinity stay with us during a part of our lifetime on earth, might not they suppose themselves to be living another physical life?

That some do have the impression of "living many lives on earth" has been conveyed through numerous communications from the World of Spirits. And in a sense it could be said that spirits return to earth experience perhaps again and again, if they have been assigned, as what Swedenborg calls "attendant spirits," to be psychically attuned to someone on earth. "Attendant spirits," says Swedenborg, are a necessary aspect of the law of equilibrium whereby we on earth are held balanced between good and evil influences, continually in contact with both so that, with our gift of free-will, we can make choices.

And thus Bridey Murphy, who was actually 150 years old according to her first memories, believed herself to be the young housewife under hypnosis whose memories she also had in her role, presumably, of attendant spirit. Bridey's personality was strikingly similar to that of the hypnotized woman — which of course strengthened the theory of reincarnation but also substantiates Swedenborg's explanation that the spirits with us are affinitive and identify with our lives. With anyone's consciousness inactive as in hypnosis, an attendant spirit anxious to be listened to — and invited, as Bridey was — has an open door into this plane of existence. An obsessing spirit, as

in the case of the little Hindu girl, so clearly seems like a spirit being reborn on earth that it is possible the idea of reincarnation arose, in part at least, from repeated occurrences of possession.

TELEPATHY

The information given by Swedenborg concerning the interchange of thoughts and memories between our minds and those in the World of Spirits, brings us to the best-known form of ESP: telepathy. Telepathy is communication from one mind to another without physical means; it is a direct transfer of impressions or thoughts. This, says Swedenborg, is how all in the spiritual world can communicate — not only with one another, but with us. We *could* likewise consciously communicate with them as the first people on earth did, if the history of the human race were not one of steadily turning away from acknowledgment of the Spiritual World. The telepathic ability remains within us but usually does not now develop until our arrival in the World of Spirits.

Primitive people use telepathy and small children often do, but when it is not encouraged it quickly gets overwhelmed with education in physical and material directions. A few persons experience this ability in a permanently active state — some only occasionally; and with all of us it stirs a bit now and then, although we may not recognize it. It is believed that telepathy with study and practice could be expanded.

My grandmother told me that she often called her boys in from play telepathically; so when I had children, I tried it — and succeeded. Other incidents convinced me that children do use telepathy, and that

adults — if they are interested enough to try — can use it with them. When our younger daughter first began to talk, it was quite unintelligible to others and sometimes even to me — but her sister, 2 years older, always knew and interpreted for me what was being said. She also, at the age of 2, used to announce that her daddy was on the way home from work — which was only a short walk but never at a regular time; and sure enough in a few moments he always arrived. Our small son, if I asked him what his father was doing at a certain time while away on a business trip, would tell me details which I was able to confirm later.

Telepathy operates in a variety of ways, often quite complex. I knew of a man who entered a hotel lobby one evening, to meet a friend. The lobby was empty except for a woman who seemed agitated, leaving her chair frequently to walk around and then sit down again. The man, observing that her face looked tired and anxious, after a few minutes felt impelled to go to her, to ask if he could be of service in any way. They talked together and he learned that she was indeed in a predicament, being newly arrived from the Near East only to find that her arrangements had been disrupted.

The man was able to put her in touch with an agency that could give assistance, and not until he had finished telephoning about it did he realize with a shock that he had been speaking a foreign language with the lady — a language which he did not know at all! There is no explanation — *except* for those who understand our telepathic relationship with the World of Spirits, and so could see the possibility of an attendant spirit (or “guardian angel,” we might say) speaking through the man to the lady; for spirits, we are told, can use any languages known to the persons they are associating with.

I had a similar happening during a trip to South America where, at a busy intersection in Maracaibo, a little old woman of the peasant type came up to me and began talking. She asked if I was from the United States, if the tall man was my husband, and the boy my son — how old was he? What a big boy for his age! And so on, until the press of traffic forced us to move along. Whereupon my husband said: "I never saw anything like that! You were speaking English and she was speaking another language, and you understood each other perfectly!"

A remarkable book was published in England, in 1971, called *Unfinished Symphonies*. It was written by Rosemary Brown who has been extremely psychic all her life — seeing, hearing, and knowing with extra-sensory perception. Her book is an account of the results. At the age of 7 she became aware of a certain spirit who told her he would return when she was grown up and would give her music. He did return, at a time when she was idly playing the piano. She liked music, and had piano lessons as a child but did not go far with them and was inexperienced. On this occasion she found music suddenly being played through her hands.

Similar incidents followed, and she began to see other spirits who also played through her hands. It varied greatly and was music she never would have played herself, so she began to want to write it down. Her knowledge of technique was limited, however, so she had difficulty — until the spirits took to dictating what she should write. As she became acquainted with these personalities she learned that they were famous composers: a group of about 12 including Chopin, Beethoven, Bach, Brahms, Rachmaninov, and especially Franz Liszt whom she had seen first when she was 7 and who worked most closely with her. All of this group dictated elaborate compositions and she,

who had no interest in classical music, gradually accumulated over 400 classical-type scores. It seems as if it were done by automatic writing for the script varies with different compositions, and was taken down much more rapidly than even accomplished musicians could do from dictation.

Rosemary Brown was told that the purpose of the work was not primarily to give us this new good music but, through convincing people that it came from these world-known composers, to bring us knowledge of the *continuation of individual life following death*. Sir Donald Tovey, a noted musicologist who had died in 1940, joined the group long enough to dictate a statement which concludes:

We are not transmitting music to Rosemary Brown simply for the sake of offering possible pleasure in listening thereto; it is the implications relevant to this phenomenon which we hope will stimulate sensible and sensitive interest and stir many who are intelligent and impartial to consider and explore the unknown regions of man's mind and psyche.

Exploration did, indeed, follow. Rosemary Brown was interviewed on television, and studied by psychiatrists and by the Director of the Institute of Parapsychology in Holland. They found her perfectly sound of mind and well-balanced. The music was exhaustively examined by musicologists who judged it to be definitely characteristic of the various composers, even as to handwriting and individual habits and idiosyncracies. They also verified that Rosemary Brown does not have the knowledge or ability to produce such compositions, or even to play many of them after she had written them down.

She asked the spirits why, in view of her lack of any real musical accomplishment, *she* was chosen for this project, and was told that if she were accomplished no one would believe that she did not compose the music herself. Renowned musicians were producing their compositions in this tedious, difficult way because the world would not pay attention to anyone not well-known; it was absolutely essential that the sources of what was being given, as proof of life beyond death, be identifiable with the sources of music already recognized by the world. The individuality of music produced by a *variety* of famous composers, through a medium unskilled musically, would demonstrate that accomplishment before death can continue after death.

It is known that there are spirits who enjoy impersonating and are clever at it, so we might wonder if this is that sort of situation. But it is improbable that spirits who were not brilliant composers on earth could become so in the World of Spirits to the point of being able to reproduce the unique characteristics of truly great composers. And the motivation, *not* of extending musical fame but of demonstrating individual life beyond death, is extremely exciting!

Most of us can remember strange little instances of mysteriously knowing something which we had no outward way of learning; perhaps information in an unopened letter, or what someone is going to say next, the death of a far-away relative, the approaching arrival of an unexpected caller. Telepathy is not only in the Spiritual World and between it and us; it is also among us on earth. For instance, my husband or I often would suddenly speak of something the other was thinking — but we never could determine who had the thought first. There is no way of knowing how many of our thoughts come to us directly from someone else, either

friend or stranger. Apparent plagiarism of which bewildered authors insist themselves innocent, can be explained by telepathic rapport. And have you ever wondered *how* thoughts are exchanged between us and God?

There is no question that E S P, especially in the form of telepathy, is today a recognized fact of life; laboratories all over the world have been busy proving it. Yet they can not explain how or why it exists, because they do not take that "one step beyond" the level of man's brain. Russia, especially, has been doing intensive and very interesting research into several types of psychic phenomena, but with the assumption that these studies concern physical abilities.

Swedenborg wrote: "Effects teach nothing but effects, and when they alone are examined they do not bring to light any cause; to know effects from *causes* is to be wise." (D.L.&W.119) "*All things which exist in the natural world are effects, and all things which exist in the Spiritual World are the causes of those effects.*" (D.L.&W.134)

Ignorance of the Spiritual World is what keeps psychical research from "getting off the ground."

Another difficulty with investigating E S P by scientific methods is that laboratory verification depends upon being able to repeat results from experiments; but much of psychic experience is *spontaneous* and can not be produced at will or on demand. Straining to do so can lead to the temptation to devise fraudulent achievement. An additional drawback is that the methods of laboratory investigation confine the phenomena to a physical framework, so that the search for cause is limited to physically observable sources.

COMMUNICATION

Some, believing it is dangerous to make contact with spirits, have proclaimed that we must have nothing to do with psychic phenomena if their causes are in the World of Spirits. However, Swedenborg tells us that we already *are* in contact with spirits! We should think more clearly about this and understand that what is dangerous is to try deliberately to establish *personal* contact, for this is an intentional invitation which undeveloped or earthbound spirits, and evil ones, are always eager to accept. We must distinguish between spontaneous phenomena and induced response.

Spontaneous happenings of an orderly sort come to us for a good reason — usually to give warning, help, or enlightenment. If they are disturbing, they have been facilitated by something disorderly which stimulated them. Ouija boards, automatic writing, and seances are deliberate methods which may be used from sincere and high motives and *may* connect with helpful or at least harmless spirits; but these procedures might also open wide the door for mischievous or bad entities to crowd in. As previously said, many *such* spirits are talented actors who delight in portraying your great-grandmother or your Cousin Emma, sounding just like her — conversing about family affairs — and astonishing you with information known only to you and her (telepathed right out of your own memory!). Some psychic experiences which begin spontaneously on a high plane, when *pursued further* simply deteriorate into stupid, deceiving or even frightening episodes.

Edgar Cayce, the spectacular and controversial trance-medium who during the first half of this century helped hundreds of people through diagnosing illnesses and suggesting remedies, branched out from this in later years to give “life readings” — that is, summaries

of people's previous incarnations on earth. When he was diagnosing he used the pronoun "we" and a technical vocabulary quite unknown to himself who had not gone beyond 7th grade in school. It seems obvious that his medical information came from a group of spirits who, on earth, had been physicians; but doubtless his "life readings" were supervised by believers in reincarnation who were, actually, giving their own histories.

I had a friend who, experimenting with automatic writing, was at first quite thrilled with the lofty sentiments and wise sayings that came through. But as time went on she was appalled to find herself writing not only nonsense but very offensive phrases. Quickly and wisely she discontinued the project.

On the other hand, some of the finest psychic communications ever published began with a Ouija board, progressed to automatic writing, developed into direct-voice communication, and then into specific awareness (on the part of the medium) of the Spiritual World. Through this contact discussions of a very high caliber were carried on by a group of spirits endeavoring to give a well-planned course of spiritual instruction. Evidently it was part of their plan to take advantage of an invitation from someone extremely capable of cooperating. These discussions were published as the so-called "Betty Books" — Betty being the medium whose husband (the well-known explorer, Stewart Edward White) recorded the communications. The books, issued somewhat over 30 years ago, are unique in that they began with communications from the World of Spirits through Betty — and ended with communications *from Betty after she died*.

In general there is no danger in studying and learning about psychic phenomena, but only in artificially in-

ducing them. Since Swedenborg tells us so much about the World of Spirits and our continual relationship with it here and now, preparatory to our eventual functioning in it full-time, it seems quite important that we learn all we can about it, observe everything that indicates our involvement with it, and acquire an intelligent understanding. Surely we would do no less for planning a long vacation in a foreign land!

People say: "I'm not interested in a 'next life'; I just want to know how to get along in *this* one." They also say: "I'd like to believe in life after death, but no one has come back to prove it." Both attitudes seem sadly ignorant, because individual life here and now would be meaningless if all its struggles and lessons do not relate to attainment beyond death. Surely the best way to learn how to get along in *this* life is to become informed about the "next life" which this is meant to prepare us for! And it is a matter of record that some *have* come back to prove it, notably Jesus Christ — and Emanuel Swedenborg who functioned in both aspects of life for 25 years before dying.

Man is a spiritual being; extra-sensory perception is an ability belonging to his spiritual level, and if we are to develop spiritually we should know as much as possible about this highest plane of our existence. Swedenborg from his own learning has made available more knowledge concerning our spiritual capacity than has any other person in history. Some of Swedenborg's descriptions of life in the World of Spirits have by now been confirmed by psychic-sensitives and communications from the so-called "other side" — at quite separated times and places, and independent of one another. What makes Swedenborg so special is that he tells much more and in greater detail than anyone else ever has done; and he above all others explains this information as directly involved with the law of affinity *and* with man's relationship to the Lord.

AFFINITY

We must be sure that we understand what *affinity* means. It is absolutely true that "birds of a feather flock together," and this is demonstrated in all of Nature: when birds migrate, they do not travel in mixed groups like a bunch of people on the subway; they fly in flocks of only their own kind. Plants and trees grow in clusters of one variety; lions associate with lions, and rabbits with rabbits. They are mingled together throughout the land, but they live and function and have relationship chiefly with their own species. Only human beings, who from the beginning were given dominion over all the earth, can easily assimilate different groups in Nature, and so have domesticated animals and birds, teaching them to adapt to an artificial association with humans. But still, people basically concern themselves with people.

At the spiritual level there is a continual urge among humans to find and be with those who have similar attitudes, interests, and beliefs. The more we have a "life of the mind" the less we seek conformity in outward appearances, and the more we search for an inner agreement of desires and appreciations. With such an inherent impulse, it may seem strange that much of the time we can not satisfy it. External conditions often force us — in our work or in traveling around, or on the street where we live — to mingle with people who do not attract us because they and we have nothing inwardly in common and so nothing important to share. Those with whom we have *affinity* — that is, *similarity of affections* — may be quite separated from us outwardly by space or circumstance; and we wonder why it should be this way.

Swedenborg gives us a good reason. He explains that we are here on earth for one main purpose: to develop

what he calls our "ruling love" — that is, what we most of all care about and desire. There are really only 2 basic "ruling loves": love for God, or love of self; all affections line up behind one or the other, and we choose which will be permanently ours. Most of us can not make choices unless we know the alternatives involved, and so we must associate with all kinds of people before we understand and have a feeling about the difference between Godliness and selfishness. Day by day we choose, by observing not only what appeals to us but also what repels us.

Swedenborg says that after death a man's ruling love never changes throughout eternity, for changes are possible only by being forced to make choices, and the means for this — through non-affinitive associations — exist only on the earth plane. Therefore it seems logical that we would not move into the World of Spirits, from this first phase of existence, until our ruling love has been crystallized.

You might then ask: "What about the death of children too young to have made choices?" Swedenborg tells us that children entering the Spiritual World are immediately in the care of angels who educate them for adulthood in a heavenly society. This would not be possible, under the law of affinity, if such children were not already of angelic tendency — from heredity rather than environmental experience.

We never can judge other people's spiritual needs; they are not measured by time or age but by inherent quality. Some children have, through heredity, extraordinarily extensive and active talents very early in life — for accomplishments such as ice-skating, swimming, piano playing, mathematics, chess, and so on. There are "infant prodigies" in a variety of areas. The youngest college president in history was only 23 years old when in 1970 he was appointed to rescue

Franconia College, in New Hampshire, from bankruptcy and collapse.

Within 3 years he restored the college to stability, paid off its debts, recruited a new faculty, obtained better buildings and equipment, increased student applications, and prepared the college to receive accreditation. Should such rare ability, just because it hasn't been here very long, wait for another 20 years or so before fulfillment? Isn't it possible that likewise some may, by heredity (good or bad), have the direction of their ruling love set at an early age — even in infancy? Thus they would not need the tedious process of determining it through trial and error.

Yet for most of us life as we know it here and now consists of having to function in a framework of decisions which will always be made with an effort toward affinity — without necessarily attaining it on this plane where non-affinitive people and activities are intermingled. Life in the Spiritual World, after death, will consist of achieving affinity because societies there are ordered according to the ruling love. It is those who share the same ruling love who are drawn to one another, and the quality of the affinity depends upon the nature of the love. Knowing this should help us to decide what we want our ruling love to be!

Since we are, even on earth, unconsciously living a spiritual life, the law of affinity protects our contact with the Spiritual World so that when we choose what is good and true angelic spirits are attracted to us. Why, then, be disturbed by the fact that evil spirits also are around? It is a peculiar perversity of human nature to pay more attention to evil than to good; newspapers and newscasts, for instance, give much more space and emphasis to crimes than to the quiet, useful projects that are going on. So we are apt to get more vivid mental

images of evil than of good, and — learning that the World of Spirits, although invisible, is all around us — we shrink with fright because evil spirits might be near. Perhaps this is when we should consider very critically what our innermost feelings and thoughts might attract! But at the same time why not rejoice because the good ones are here, too, and *they* have been sent to us by the Lord.

Swedenborg wrote, referring to an occasion when he was conscious in the World of Spirits: "There were many spirits about me who were not good. An angel came, and the spirits could not endure his presence . . . and, as he came nearer, fell back more and more. . . . One angel can put to flight myriads of evil spirits." (A.1398) Elsewhere Swedenborg stated: "Such power have angels in the Spiritual World. They have similar power in the natural world, too, when it is granted. . . . It is to be known, however, that angels have no power at all from themselves, but that *all* their power is from the Lord." (H.H. 229-230) "Angels are sent to men that they may guard them and withdraw them from evil affections — and thoughts therefrom — and inspire them with good affections so far as they receive them from *freedom*. . . . But all these functions of angels are functions of *the Lord* through the angels." (H.H.391)

Our spiritual education surely should include learning to understand our invisible environment, good and evil, and to control our relationship with it so we can feel at home in it. If we attain this, our spiritual horizon will widen tremendously. We shall then be able to *feel* the closeness to us of those we most love who have gone ahead into the Spiritual World. We shall know that our inability to see them, to hear and touch them physically, in no way diminishes their continuing presence which, in fact, can now be more immediate than ever.

Swedenborg explained that thought and affection are what make *a person*. He wrote: "It is the spirit which thinks in man; and thought united to affection constitutes man." (H.H.445) It is the one-of-a-kind pattern, of thinking and feeling, which becomes an individual personality and which, having begun to grow, never ends. It is through the individuality of thought and feeling that we know one another, communicate with and influence each other; and it is this: *the person*, that is released through death into a larger plane of growth. Death begins on the physical plane but ends in the spiritual plane, and is simply life as we know it becoming "the next life" wherein the individual continues to develop as the person whom we love — still here, still sharing thoughts with us and responding to ours.

THE INVISIBLE PRESENCE

And finally we come to awareness of the Invisible Presence most widely acknowledged but least felt personally. We as persons exist because of that First Person whose infinite wisdom and love cause us to think and feel. "We are, because God is." (ES — D.P.46) It is the Christian belief that the Lord is with all of us always, yet usually we are more conscious of our own selves than of God's closeness to us.

Someone said, in *Unity* magazine, that to acknowledge the presence of God, while behaving as if He were absent, makes no sense! Brother Lawrence, the 17th century monk known for his devoted companionship with the Lord, wrote in a letter: "In the noise and clutter of my kitchen while several persons are at the same time calling for different things, I possess God in as great tranquillity as if I were upon my

knees at the blessed sacrament. . . . He is always near you and with you; leave Him not alone. You would think it rude to leave a friend alone who came to visit you; why then, must God be neglected?"

Children begin life in a state receptive to familiarity with God. Swedenborg tells us: "From earliest infancy to the beginning of childhood, man is introduced by the Lord into Heaven, and indeed among celestial angels." (A.5342) It is therefore very easy to teach small children the reality of a personal God; they seem already to know it.

There are delightful anecdotes which, brought together, demonstrate this: for instance, there was the Russian child who asked: "Does God know we're atheists?"

And a little boy, absorbed with crayon-work, was questioned by his teacher as to what he was doing. "I'm drawing a picture of God," he said.

"But nobody knows what God looks like!" the teacher replied. To which the boy announced: "Oh, they will when I finish!"

And in Sunday-school a small girl was called on to answer: "Is there only one God?" "Yes," she said, and then was asked: "How do you know?" — to which she gave some thought and then explained: "Well, since God is everywhere, there isn't any room for another God."

As people grow up and become immersed in the details of physical existence, they may continue to believe that there is God; they may go faithfully to church each week, and give time to church work; but do they *feel* that the Lord is personally present wherever they are? I once asked someone this; and she looked surprised, then in a sort of fluster said: "In what way do you mean?"

Someone else said to me, at a community-church meeting where I had given a little talk: "God seems so definite to you! How do you make Him so real?"

To which I could only answer: "I don't *make* Him real; He *is* real, and I just recognize it."

Peter Marshall, former prominent clergyman in Washington, D.C., wrote a prayer especially applicable to this materialistic era — asking for help toward *knowing God's closeness* as well as we know things that surround us, and *God's voice* as clearly as we hear the world's noise.

In one of his crusades, televised nation-wide, Billy Graham told of a woman who, paralyzed and bedridden for five years, said that although she was alone most of the time she never felt lonely — because Christ is everywhere.

A while ago I came across a loose clipping among my papers, with no indication of its source or its author — labelled just "Grand Canyon," and then these words: "There was a gigantic stillness throughout the canyon. The stillness was God. There was great beauty. And the beauty was God. There was of course a quality of timelessness — which was God. Arrayed before me were 140 million years of His Presence."

Thus when people do feel the Lord's Presence, how deep and how strong it can be! How greatly it could change daily living if only we could hold on to that feeling!

But it takes thought to expand feeling, and it takes knowledge to expand thought. Swedenborg gave us the knowledge which should help us to feel our co-existence with those in the World of Spirits and our nearness to all there whom we love.

Especially, then, we should be able to feel the eternal Presence of the Lord whose world it is and whose

people we are. It is by telepathy that our prayers reach Him, and by telepathy that we receive His guidance; and when we are aware of His Presence, it is through extra-sensory perception. If we know this and think about it, often enough and long enough, we should more and more *feel* the reality of God as a Person to whom we as persons are intimately and forever related.

Swedenborg said: "The Divine Love of God had no other end when it created the world, than to conjoin man to Himself and Himself to man, and thus to dwell with man." (T.C.R. 786)

The coming of Jesus Christ was foretold as "God *with* us." And it was Jesus who said: "God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in Truth." (John 4:24)

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